

Nathaniel Winkel
Christmas Eve
Isaiah 9:2,6,7
12/24/17

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (Eph 1:3)

Isaiah 9:2-7

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Did you drive around and look at any Christmas lights this year? When we lived in Omaha, my family used to do that every year. My mom and dad knew the neighborhoods to go to and see some of the best Christmas decorations around Omaha. It's kind of cool here, when you see a house that stands alone up on a hillside all lit up. All around there is nothing but darkness, but their lights shine so brightly. That's what Isaiah invites us to see this Christmas as he, inspired by God, is able to look 700 years into the future to [See the Brightest Christmas Light](#) shining in Bethlehem.

Isaiah was writing during a dark time in Israel. God's people had turned away from him and brought his judgment. Isaiah was the messenger God sent to tell them of the coming captivity in Babylon.

But, God brought Isaiah's eyes to see beyond the physical and political darkness that closed in on Israel. He saw the spiritual darkness that covered the whole earth. He saw a world of people walking in the darkness of sin – a people surrounded by death, the curse of sin. In that world of sin and death, he saw a light, a great light. **“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”**

If the power goes out it's hard to find your way around, isn't it? Even if you are in a familiar place, in your own house, if you don't have a flashlight available, you find yourself groping around hoping you don't run into something in the dark. That is how God pictures the affects of sin. Sin plunges you into darkness. It makes you grope around through life and trips you over the obstacles it throws in your way.

The darkness of sin has enveloped the world since the fall into sin in the Garden of Eden. Sin has infected and affected everything. Paul wrote, **“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time”** (Romans 8:22). The affects of sin on our world are clearly evident as everything decays and falls apart.

Worse than that, we, and all mankind were stuck in the darkness of sin. Sin ripped us away from the love of God and made us and all people deserving of his punishment. That sinful darkness clung to us from birth, and that darkness of sin into which we are born brought with it the darkness of the shadow of death.

The only hope for souls stumbling in sin's night is God's **"great light."** God's great light would bring deliverance from the darkness of sin. God's great light would chase away the darkness of sin and death by bringing forgiveness to those who have been brought into God's light through faith.

God allowed Isaiah to see the freedom from the darkness of sin and death that he had promised. He allowed Isaiah to see the one who would break the darkness for us and bring us into that light of God's forgiveness. Who is that? **"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**

To the shepherds of Bethlehem on the evening of the first Christmas the angel said, **"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord"** (Luke 2:10,11). At the birth of Jesus, light shone in the darkness. He is the great light God promised to send to destroy the darkness of sin. The Christmas account from Luke's Gospel tells us the events of Jesus' birth. It seems so unlikely that the child born in Bethlehem, in a stable in Bethlehem, would be the Savior. He wasn't born to a king or queen, but to poor, little Mary. He wasn't hailed by trumpets and visited by royalty, but by humble and lowly shepherds.

But there he was, the fulfillment of all God's promises. The brightest Christmas light had come to bring an end to the darkness of sin. So that we don't think little of this little child, Jesus, born in Bethlehem, God showed Isaiah who he was. Clothed in that human flesh, appearing so humble and lowly is the **"Wonderful Counselor"**. He is the **"Mighty God"** come to the rescue of his people. He is the **"Everlasting Father"** who brings you into his loving arms. He is the **"Prince of Peace"**. He brought peace for you by chasing away the darkness and punishment of sin.

The child of Bethlehem, the son of Mary, Jesus is "Immanuel" – "God with us". God himself chose to leave the comfort of heaven to take on our human flesh. He came to take away the awful power that sin and Satan and death held over you. He came to take away sin and give his forgiveness to you through his death. He came to bring you into the wonderful light of God's forgiving grace in his kingdom. And his is a kingdom that will never end.

The people of Israel had seen nations rise and fall. The kingdom of David and Solomon in Judah was itself being threatened at the time Isaiah wrote these words. But the kingdom established by David's greater descendant, the child born to us – Jesus, will never end. **"Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever."**

The shepherds, on the evening of that first Christmas, were the first to come and see. They heard the angels sing, **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests"** (Luke 2:14). They were brought into the kingdom over which Jesus rules forever and ever. Today, so many years later, we have come to see the newborn King too. We are part of his kingdom along with the shepherds and all others who have been brought into it by God's grace.

God has brought you into that kingdom of your Savior by bringing you to faith. He chased away the darkness of slavery to sin and brought the light of Jesus' glory into your life through his Word. He brought you out of the shadow of death and has given you the light of the glory of Christ.

Isaiah saw the brightest Christmas light long before God ever sent that light. He saw the light that shines for you today, bringing forgiveness for all your sins. If you haven't yet, drive around and look at the Christmas lights and rejoice that God has made the great light of Jesus shine in your heart.

Amen

Now to him who is able to establish you by (the) gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, ... to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! (Rom 16:25a,27)

Amen